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CIRCUMSTANCES

OF THE

DEATH

OF

Mr. SCAWEN.

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NEW YORK

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# CIRCUMSTANCES

OF THE DEATH OF

Mr. SCAWEN,

R.

With Genuine Particulars relative to

Miss JENNY BUTTERFIELD,

Now under Confinement, and charged with  
the MURDER of that GENTLEMAN :

Including a Relation of the Origin of her Family—the  
Particulars of her Seduction and Connections, and the  
Manner in which Mr. SCAWEN was really poisoned ;

WITH ANECDOTES OF

Mr. M———, the Brewer, and  
Captain ———

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WHITAKER, Mitre Court,  
Fleet Street ;

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Royal Exchange.

MDCCLXXV.



CIRCUMSTANCES

OF THE DEATH OF

MR. JOHN W.

WILLIAM BUTTERFIELD

MRS. JENNY BUTTERFIELD

Now under the charge, and charged with  
the management of the business.

Information of the Origin of the Family—  
the names of the ancestors and the  
names of the children and the names of the  
children of the children.

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# MEMOIRS

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Miss JANE BUTTERFIELD.

**M**ISS Jenny Butterfield, the unfortunate heroine of these pages, who is now under confinement, and is to take her trial on Wednesday next, at Croydon Affizes,

Affizes, for the wilful murder of James Scawen, Esq; is the daughter of a person of that name, who formerly lived at Knightsbridge, but since deceased; his profession was that of a Bricklayer, in which he was a master: her unhappy mother is still living, and now resides at Knightsbridge, in the capacity of a Black Milliner.

This unfortunate child, Jenny, possessed the most attractive charms, though her bloom at present is much decayed, as may reasonably be expected in her now deplorable situation.—Her youth was spent in innocence; a decent education was given her; in short, at the age of sixteen, ✓ she was an amiable young woman, and might have so remained, had not the  
cruel

cruel despoiler, man, destroyed the growing virtues of an harmless virgin, this unfortunate girl was reduced from the paths of Virtue by Mr. M——, the Brewer; to him she owes the loss of her innocence. Though her abhorrence of vice was such, that he was a long time before he could accomplish his designs on the beautiful subject of these memoirs; at length, however, he one evening inveigled her from Knightsbridge, and took her to London; as they were passing through ——— Street, he suddenly caught her in his arms, and conveyed her into the house of the notorious ———, here we must draw a veil over the scene; suffice it to say, at this period the poor girl was undone by Mr. M——, the Brewer, a man of a warm constitution, but of an ungenerous mind; capable of committing



committing the most atrocious crime, but incapable of making the injured person any reparation, though none adequate can be made, at least equal, to the dishonour brought on Miss Butterfield.

At the same time he endeavoured to soothe her by all the artful endearing and deceitful means in his power; but she soon found herself not only bereft of that invaluable gem, her virtue, but discovered herself deserted and neglected by the man who was the occasion of her ruin—who, not contented with having violated the laws of chastity in the atrocious crime he had been guilty of, proclaimed, in triumph, to some of his companions, his dishonourable and infamous victory  
over

over her virtue. — This reprobation of her character compleated at once, the overthrow of her reputation; she therefore soon became the object of regard and favour in the eyes of others; the consequence of which was, that she, in a very short time after, was connected with a young gentleman of the army, who so strongly attached himself to her, that they lived together for a considerable time in the exchange of mutual love and sincere friendship.

Miss Butterfield had a fine form, with an engaging disposition; add to this, the good natural parts with which she was endowed, we cannot wonder she was calculated to please—

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not to allure as a shewy extravagant kept-mistress, but as the representative of an engaging careful wife.

After having lived with her friend, Captain ———, for a considerable time, he was called upon to join his regiment——the dearest friends must part!——as she really loved her gallant, and as he had a very great regard for her, the parting of this couple was attended with all those heart-felt pangs that cannot be described.

Miss Butterfield by this time had become the object, and admiration of several persons of quality, to all of whom she turned an indifferent ear, till her noble



ble soldier left her;—what could she then do?—her friend had but little of worldly treasures for himself, and, of course, was unable to provide for his charmer till he returned——love and arms were his professions, and none enjoyed the former with more delight than Captain —, with his dear Butterfield——Miss Butterfield was not a vicious wanton:—perhaps few were ever born with sentiments so nearly allied to honour and virtue——let those who have never been tempted, triumph in their celibacy——I say, let those boast of preserving that honour, which they were never tempted to part with.

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To proceed, our heroine again found herself thrown on the world;—a connection must be made; all were alike to her;—one soon presented itself——Mr. Scawen saw her; a slight connection was all he meant; but upon a further acquaintance, he discovered her to be a most indulgent domestic creature; instead of an expensive kept-mistress, he found her a frugal housewife; indeed, her manners were such, that even the rigid could but applaud a conduct so unexceptionable.

Mr. Scawen insisted upon her taking his name;—envy itself was set at defiance——but a luckless and fatal accident ensued, and, which is the originating cause of her present confinement;  
under



under a charge shocking to humanity, and may, perhaps, notwithstanding her probable innocence, go near to be her destruction.

Considerably after forming this connection, her former lover, the Captain, arrived in town, and found out her situation; he discovered her to be kept by an old man; he wrote to her; she answered him in a manner that displeased him; he told her, he thought her attachment to a man of Mr. Scawen's years was both unreasonable and unnatural; he however painted in lively colours their past loves, and mutual endearments, conjuring her to meet him privately. In her reply,

the



she excused herself strenuously, but at length reluctantly complied.

So true is it, that an illicit correspondence, even by letter, is criminal, and cannot in such delicate cases fail of being productive of the most alarming consequences—she ought at first to have abstained from the intercourse; for, as the poet says,

“The woman that deliberates is lost.”

Their meeting produced consequences which we wish to omit relating; but as our narrative greatly depends on this circumstance, we shall endeavour to explain our meaning, and convey the particulars in terms the most unexceptionable.

Her

Her lover communicated a certain disease to Miss Butterfield, which disorder Miss Butterfield transferred to Mr. Scawen,——she had reason from her own state of body to believe Mr. Scawen infected; fearful of the consequences, unknown to Mr. Scawen, she procured some mercurials, and administered them to him; the infirm state of his body, and her injudicious application of the medicine, produced the unfortunate gentleman's death.

When old men get young wives or young mistresses, they generally find themselves neglected and abused. Youth and age are different in constitution, as the months of January and May, in fertility; the abuse put upon Mr. Scawen,  
by

by Miss Butterfield's granting favours to her quondam lover, was such as he might expect ; and at the same time she has by her imprudence and infidelity, brought herself a punishment, already too severe for her misconduct, which was rather politically venal, than intentionally criminal ; it will doubtless be dangerous for her at the trial to set up these facts in her defence, as implications may be drawn injurious to her cause.—Unhappily in this kingdom, the spirit of dirty pride is become so predominant, that a man, after having once given his opinion, finds himself obliged to persist in it, though he afterwards perceives himself in the wrong ; for to retract an error in these days, is to acknowledge yourself a fool—what was once a merit next to doing right, viz. the confessing a mistake, is now the greatest disgrace that can stigmatize



matize a man; let the self important physical gentry, concerned in this prosecution, take heed what opinions they propagate——Let the court of the council say, on your *oath*, Sir, are you sure to what you swear? are you divested of prejudice? have you no other motives than common justice? your evidence no pride, no hypothesis to support?---There are at this time three criminal prosecutions carrying on against three females of different ranks in life; to what end are they carried on? is it for justice sake that the prosecutors of the Duchess of Kingston, pursue her, or for the sin of bigamy? or is it her fortune, they have in view?—does the aged and avaricious baronet prosecute Mrs. Rudd for justice sake, or to destroy the woman's claim on the effects in his possession? Has

Jemmy Scawen no fears about him, that if Miss Butterfield gets acquitted, that the Lord Chancellor will make him refund, and place Miss Butterfield, on the same ground she stood, before the alteration of Mr. Scawen's Will? not that we have a bad opinion of Jemmy Scawen; but we would, nevertheless, caution him to be just, and fear not—— Jemmy loves a fine girl himself, and keeps one of the finest women in the kingdom: his personal charms and insinuating ways seduced her from a noble lord; she declares she left lord —— to enjoy the handsomest man in England; and despised a coronet for the sake of the representative of Surry—— But to return to Miss Butterfield; she may be considered as equally guilty of poisoning, Mr. Scawen, as an apothecary's apprentice, who serves arsenic,

by



by a mistake, to a customer, who afterwards takes it, and dies.

About the 25th of July a warrant was issued out against Miss Butterfield; she was carried before Sir John Fielding and rest of the magistrates, in Bow-Street, on the twenty ninth—Mr. S—, the surgeon, gave an historical account to the bench of the progress of Mr. Scawen's illness;—Mr. S— appeared to be so very confident and clear, that he seemed to have learned his lesson before he came to Bow-Street—the bench gave credit to his assertions, and Miss Butterfield was committed—Miss Butterfield's defence was, that Mr. Scawen was continually taking quack medicines, and, if he died by poison, it must have been



been in consequence of taking those compositions; formerly a surgeon did not go out of his line of business, but now the apothecary and the surgeon both set up for physicians, while porter and footmen make ordinary surgeons and apothecaries.

Mr. S\_\_\_\_\_ may, however, be right as to Mr. Scawen's being poisoned; but were I on the jury, I should consider the evidence of a surgeon, with much more caution, than that of a physician, whose business it is to give evidence on such matters—ever since the separation of the surgeons from the barber's company, the practice of physic has declined.

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a just jury will direct and acquit  
pursuing according to the truth and her in-

lawful laws.  
A parade was made at Bow-Street of  
the quack medicine being analized—and  
no mercurial particulars found in its  
composition, ——— Does this prove  
that they never used mercury in the  
composition at any time; it is easy  
to bring a harmless glass of water, or  
box of pills, and tell you this is the  
same that was sold to Mr. Scawen—but  
we may choose whether we will believe  
it, or no———nor on any account deem  
a person guilty upon such vague, far  
fetched proofs; but forsooth here is a large  
sum of money depending——and what  
will not money do —— it will make  
black white, and white black;——but  
a just

a just jury will discern and acquit, or  
punish according to the truth and her in-  
violable laws.

A party was made at Bow Street of  
the purest medicine being analysed—and  
no medicinal particulars found in its  
composition. — Does this prove  
that they never used mercury in the  
composition at any time? it is easy  
to bring a hundred glass of water, or  
box of pills, and this is the  
same that was sold to Mr. Scowen—but  
we may choose whether we will believe  
it or no — not on any account deem  
a person guilty upon such vague and  
fetched proofs; but to look here is a large  
sum of money depending — and what  
will not money do — it will make  
black white, and white black; — but  
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# POSTSCRIPT.

## ACCOUNT of the TRIAL

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Miss JANE BUTTERFIELD,  
ON AN INDICTMENT FOR MURDER,

At the late Assizes for the County of Surry,  
held at Croydon.

**A**T seven o'clock the prisoner was brought to the bar; soon after Sir Sidney Stafford Smythe, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, came into court, and being seated, the business begun. The indictment was read over by the clerk, charging the prisoner, Jane Butterfield, with having murdered the late William Scawen, Esq. by administering poison to him at different times. Mr. Lucas opened on behalf of the prosecution, and spoke near an hour. Mr. Cochran was then sworn and examined: he declared he had acted as Mr. Scawen's apothecary, and gave a very circumstantial account of his state of health for some time before he died; he told the Court that the deceased was greatly emaciated, was in a very ill habit of body, and had an ulcer in his arm, which bred maggots; that in March last he thought it expedient to rub it with some mercurial ointment, in order to destroy the animalcula: that it threw Mr. Scawen into a salivation; soon after which he put himself entirely under the care of Mr. Sanxy, and he (the witness)

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ness) did little more than make up the proper medicines.

Mr. Sanxy was a full hour giving his evidence. He began with describing Mr. Scawen's situation when he saw him on the 4th of May, declared what food and medicines he prescribed for him, and said, that on the 14th of June he complained to him of a *brassy taste* in his mouth. Mr. Sanxy felt his pulse, and on examining his mouth, discovered symptoms of an approaching salivation. He saw him again on the 18th, when he again complained of the brassy taste, and was actually in a state of high salivation. Mr. Sanxy suspecting unfair treatment, questioned him as to the person who gave him his medicines, and was told by him, that he received them always from the hands of the prisoner. As the symptoms grew more and more violent, Mr. Sanxy prescribed the decoction of the bark, in order to prevent a mortification; and when he next saw Mr. Scawen, the latter complained, that the doses of the decoction which he swallowed sometimes had, and sometimes had not, the brassy taste. In a short time an ulcer appeared to be formed in his mouth, and the gums mortified. Mr. Sanxy then called in the assistance of Mr. Young, of St. Bartholomew's hospital; and upon their visiting Mr. Scawen, Mr. Sanxy questioned him respecting the brassy taste, and asked if he should know it again; upon his replying in the affirmative, Mr. Sanxy made a weak solution of corrosive sublimate, and touched Mr. Scawen's tongue with it, when he immediately said, "that was the taste." Mr. Sanxy then informed him of his opinion, that he had been poisoned, which Mr. Scawen would by no means



means believe, but ascribed his dreadful illness to a quack medicine for the rheumatism which he had taken; at length, however, he agreed to be moved to Mr. Sanxy's house, where he took more bark, but did not again complain of the brassy taste. Mr. Scawen made a fresh will at Mr. Sanxy's, and died there in a very few days. Mr. Sanxy was cross-examined by the Counsel for the prisoner, who desired to know whether he thought the second salivation might not be caused by the mercury (which occasioned the first) not being entirely out of the body. He replied in a very decisive manner, that it could not, and enlarged upon the effects of mercurial preparations, laying it down as a doctrine which he had always subscribed to, that after a salivation, no mercury remained in the system; and a second salivation, and a second brassy taste, must owe their origin to a second exhibition of mercury.

Baron Smythe asked Mr. Sanxy what appearances there were on opening the body of the deceased; the latter replied, "he did not open the body, as there was not the least occasion for it." Upon which one of the prisoner's counsel observed, that as Mr. Sanxy had positively declared the deceased was poisoned, he apprehended it would have been right for him to have gained every possible information of the state and appearance of the internal parts.

Mr. Young was sworn, and corroborated Mr. Sanxy's evidence as far as it related to the state of the deceased, when he was called in to give his advice. Upon his cross-examination, he rather differed from him respecting the effects of mercury, and the possibility of the



second salivation being in consequence of the mercury which occasioned the first.

Edward Wheelock, an old servant of Mr. Scawen, was examined, and deposed that his master made him take some of the Rhumatic Medicine with him. Upon his being asked whether he found any brassy taste in it, he said he thought it had no taste at all, or if any, it was most like water-gruel.

It was proved that all the food Mr. Scawen took was boiled in silver, and that the Quack Medicine was bought of Mr. Harris, in Saint Paul's Church-Yard.

Mr. Dodd, the compounder of the Medicine in question, declared it had no Mercurial ingredient.

Dr. Higgins in a very sensible and clear manner, gave an account of his having annalized a bottle of the Tincture for the Rheumatism, when it did not appear to have any Mercury in its composition.

Mr. Godfrey gave a similar evidence.

Dr. Saunders spoke to the effects of Corrosive Sublimate and the subtlety of its nature.

These three gentlemen, upon their cross examination, dissented from Mr. Sanxy's doctrine of the certainty of its being evacuated out of the system by salivation.

As soon as the evidence in support of the prosecution was closed, the prisoner was asked what she had to say in her defence; she replied, that her spirits were so agitated she was not able to speak what she wished the Court to hear, she begged therefore to be indulged with having her defence read by the Clerk; this request was granted. It consisted of several sheets

sheets of paper, closely written, and took up  
 near twenty minutes in the recital. It began  
 with informing the Court and Jury, that at  
 the early age of fourteen she was seduced from  
 her parents by one of her own sex and brought  
 to Mr. Scawen, that through a variety of ar-  
 tifices she was prevailed on to continue in his  
 house, and that the circumstance broke her  
 father's heart; she confessed that Mr. Scawen  
 had spared no expence in perfecting her edu-  
 cation, and that he had shewn so many instan-  
 ces of friendship and kindness to her that she  
 tenderly loved him, and had by a conduct of  
 many years, convinced him of her affection  
 and gratitude. During his illness, which was  
 almost without intermission for the last six years  
 of his life, she acted as his nurse, had watched  
 him with the most wary care, and the most  
 constant attention, having sacrificed night af-  
 ter night to wait upon him and give him his  
 food and medicines. She declared she had  
 been treated by the whole family as Mrs. Scaw-  
 en, and was received in the neighbourhood  
 in the same character; that she really and  
 sincerely loved the deceased, and taking every  
 circumstance into consideration, she hoped  
 no person would harbour a thought so injuri-  
 ous to her as to suppose her a monster capable  
 of such an inhuman act as the murder of her  
 best benefactor.

Mr. Bromfield, surgeon of St. George's  
 hospital, was the first witness sworn in behalf  
 of the prisoner; he was examined merely with  
 regard to the power of corrosive sublimate,  
 and the possibility of a second salivation ensu-  
 ing without a fresh exhibition of mercurials.  
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He spoke on the subject with that precision and freedom which are generally the characteristics of skill and experience. He declared he had, in the course of his practice, met with a variety of cases where a salivation had returned, after every effort had been made to evacuate the mercury from the system. That mercury had often lain dormant and imperceptible in the habit for several weeks; and whenever its action was re-produced, (which it might be by many casual circumstances incident to the human frame,) the *brassy* taste was always a concomitant symptom.

Mr. Howard, surgeon of the Middlesex hospital, confirmed Mr. Bromfield's evidence, by declaring he had frequently experienced the same, and that mercury was of so subtle a nature, it was not possible for any man to say for what length of time it might lie dormant before it re-appeared.

Dr. Brocklesby asserted, in like manner, that a second salivation might happen without a fresh exhibition of mercury. With regard to the *brassy* taste, he affirmed, that he lately made a solution of a very small particle of corrosive sublimate, and wet his tongue with it, that it immediately gave him a *brassy* taste; that he dined heartily after it, and in the evening the *brassy* taste returned. He instanced Dr. Mead's works on poisons as a corroboration of his opinion.

Mr. Bromfield, Dr. Brocklesby, and Mr. Howard, severally mentioned cases in point to support what they urged in opposition to Mr. Sanxy's evidence.

Mr. Ingram declared himself entirely of opinion with the three preceding witnesses.

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Mr. Parry, the surgeon, deposed, that Mr. Scawen had in his last illness consulted him about his complaints; that he mentioned to him several quack medicines which he had taken, in every one of which there were mercurial ingredients; and that he strongly cautioned him against mercurials. He said he bought a bottle of the Rheumatic Tincture before there was any report of Mr. Scawen's being poisoned, and upon tasting it, he found that it had some mercury in it, as it made him exceedingly sick, and that he well knew the taste of corrosive sublimate. That since the report, he had purchased a bottle, had analysed it, when he discovered mercury disguised with Gum Guaiacum. He complained of being unhandsomely treated in Bow-street because, before he was sworn, he had vaguely said, The Rheumatic Tincture had mercury enough in it *to kill a horse*; an expression which he used merely figuratively, without meaning to infer more from it, than that it was a very violent medicine. He instanced two cases in which a salivation had returned, and the patients had died, without having taken any fresh mercury; the one of a person, who after a salivation and an appearance of a perfect recovery, caught cold in a shower of rain, had a second salivation in consequence, and died within a few days; the other, of a lady who died, as Mr. Scawen did, of a second salivation, which caused a mortification in her mouth.

The Rev. Mr. Lodge said he had known Mr. Scawen's family for some time; that the prisoner always treated the deceased with unexampled tenderness, and that there was a mutual affection between them. A

A gentleman who had been intimate with the late Mr. Scawen for the last two years of his life, was sworn, and deposed, that he had repeatedly heard the deceased speak of the prisoner in very recommendatory terms, and that he had once bought a bottle of Maredant's Drops for him.

Miss Smith declared she had been acquainted with Mr. Scawen and the prisoner, that she went to see him a few weeks before his death, and while she was in the room, saw him take a dose of the Rheumatic Tincture, which made him very sick; that the prisoner then expressed great uneasiness at his illness, and advised him not to take any more quack medicines, as they made him rather worse than better. This witness declared she did not believe that the prisoner poisoned Mr. Scawen, as she would be the last person in the World whom she should think capable of committing such a crime.

The witnesses on the prisoner's side having been all heard, the Judge summed up the evidence, and gave his charge to the Jury; but what he said was in so low a tone of voice, that very few of the many who were present could hear it. The Jury went out of Court, and after staying about a quarter of an hour, returned and found the Prisoner **NOT GUILTY.**

The counsel for the Prosecutor were, Mr. Lucas, Mr. Rous, and Mr. Lee. For the Defendant, Mr. Serjeant Glynn, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Peckham: The Solicitors for the Prosecutor were Mess. Gregg and Potts, of London: for the Defendant, Mr. Norris, of New Inn, and Mr. Weldon, of Fetter-lane.

